

Fuller Park Community Building
North portion of Fuller Park, bounded by
West 45th Street on the north, West 46th
Street on the south, South Princeton
Street on the east, and South Stewart
Street on the west
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-1083

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

FULLER PARK COMMUNITY BUILDING

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Location: North portion of Fuller Park, bounded by West 45th Street on the north, West 46th Street on the south, South Princeton Street on the east, and South Stewart Street on the west, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.

Present Owner: The City of Chicago Park District.

Statement of Significance: The Fieldhouse is part of a well-organized complex of buildings and recreational facilities in Fuller Park, a relatively small neighborhood park on Chicago's south side. The park and its buildings are representative examples of the type of planning and architecture that was employed in the development of the city's park system during the first two decades of the 20th century. The massive, buff-colored concrete main building is linked to the adjacent buildings and courtyard by low, symmetrically planned colonnades; the entire complex is a carefully ordered and balanced design.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Before 1915.
2. Architect: Edward Herbert Bennett. The following biographical notes are taken from the material in the Burnham Library of the Chicago Art Institute for Edward H. Bennett: "Born: Cheltenham, England, 1874. Pupil of Bristol Technical College, Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris. Work: organized firm of Bennett, Parsons, Frost. City planners, designers of architectural development of Grant Park, Clarence Buckingham Memorial Fountain, Chicago. Member: Architectural Committee of Chicago World's Fair Centennial Celebration, 1933, Society of Beaux Architects."

Bennett died in 1954 at Tyron, North Carolina. He became associated with D. H. Burnham in 1904, after graduating in 1900 from the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and assisted in the preparation of the Chicago Plan. In 1909, he established his own firm, one of the first city planning groups in the country. His son, Edward H.

Bennett, Jr. continues to practice architecture in Chicago, but was not available for an interview at the time of this writing.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The land was ordered vacated by a City Ordinance passed December 11, 1905. It was obtained for use as a park by May 18, 1908. (Information obtained for the Chicago Department of Maps and Plats; Volume 1, Town of Lake.)
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: Bennett's design for the pavillion in Fuller Park recalls similar buildings produced by D. H. Burnham and Company for Chicago parks at approximately the same time. Indeed, the Fuller Park buildings were included among the illustrations in an article for the July, 1915, issue of The Architectural Record, by A. N. Rebori, which said the following of the buildings erected by D. H. Burnham and Company in the city parks; his remarks are equally applicable to Bennett's building:

At this stage it is pleasant by way of variety to come upon a group of buildings far removed from commercial clamor and strife. A visit to the extensive park areas and playgrounds that come under the supervision of the South Park Board in Chicago will no doubt reveal even to the most casual observer a quality of beauty and order prevalent throughout this system which is due in a large measure to artistic consideration given the general layout; and wherever buildings or pavilions occur it is at once evident that the buildings are admirably treated in a just relation to the surroundings. Here we find terraces, trellises, arbors, flower beds, lagoons, trees and shrubery, all designed in the most intimate connection to the building or group of buildings about which the landscape gardening harmoniously takes its place. For this reason alone we are bound to include among the most successful park buildings in America the neighborhood buildings for the South Park Commissioners, Sherman Park, Bessemer Park and Armour Square; and the South Park Commissioner's Administration Building at Washington Park, erected in the order named, in the short period from 1910 to 1913.

B. Sources of Information:

Condit, Carl W. The Chicago School of Architecture. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

Condit mentions that Bennett collaborated with Burnham on the 1909 Chicago Plan.

Siegel, Arthur (ed.). Chicago's Famous Buildings. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.

Parsons, William E. "Burnham as a Pioneer in City Planning," The Architectural Record, XXXVIII (July, 1915).

Rebori, A. N. "The Work of Burnham & Root, D. H. Burnham & Co., and Graham, Burnham & Co.," The Architectural Record, XXXVIII (July, 1915), 11-12.

Art Institute of Chicago, Burnham Library.

Biographical note, photograph, and obituary for Edward H. Bennett.

Additional primary sources concerning the Fuller Park Field-house might be located in the records of the Chicago Park District.

Prepared by Larry J. Homolka, Historian
and Assistant Supervisor
National Park Service
August, 1965

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The records and measured drawings of this structure were made during the 1965 Chicago III Project. This was the third in a series of four summer projects designed to record the significant architecture of the Chicago area. Special attention was given to the Chicago and Prairie Schools of Architecture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The project was sponsored by Mr. Earl A. Reed, FAIA. He was assisted by a Finance Committee composed of John Fugard, FAIA; William E. Hartmann, FAIA; Alfred Shaw, FAIA; and a Selection Committee consisting of James Arkin, AIA; Ruth Schoneman, Art Institute of Chicago; and J. Carson Webster, Northwestern University. Organizations cooperating with HABS in this project were the City of Chicago, the Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and its Foundation, the Society of Architectural Historians, the Garrick Salvage Fund, and the Women's Architectural League of Chicago. The University of Illinois provided office space.

Professor J. William Rudd, then of the University of Cincinnati, served as the project supervisor. Other members of the summer team were assistant supervisor and Historian, Larry Homolka, Harvard University; photographers, Harold Allen and Richard Nickel; secretary, Mrs. Bert P. Schloss, and student architects, Gary Burk, Texas Technological College; Charles Gregersen, Illinois Institute of Technology; Edward Popko, University of Florida; and Thomas Ross, University of Illinois, Urbana.